TESTIMONY OF

MARVIN FERTEL
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF NUCLEAR OFFICER
NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE

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Chairman Christopher Shays, Ranking Member Dennis Kucinich and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am Marvin Fertel, senior vice president and chief nuclear officer at the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI). I am honored to address the issues before this subcommittee today. As in previous years, I am here to discuss the importance of nuclear energy for our nation's economic growth and energy security. The nuclear energy industry is a leader in the area of industrial security and, as the committee requested, I will address how the industry has secured nuclear power facilities as deemed necessary by plant management and required by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

NEI is responsible for developing policy for the commercial nuclear industry. NEI's 250 members represent a broad spectrum of interests, including every U.S. electric company that operates a nuclear power plant. NEI's membership also includes nuclear fuel cycle companies, suppliers, engineering and consulting firms, national research laboratories, manufacturers of radiopharmaceuticals, universities, labor unions and law firms.

America's nuclear facilities maintained extremely high levels of security prior to Sept. 11, 2001, and that security is even better today. However, the nuclear energy industry continues to improve security at our nuclear power plants, and we are constantly assessing and testing our security programs.

Security at our nuclear power plants is a shared responsibility. The industry believes the greatest enhancements in security around nuclear plant sites will come by developing comprehensive strategies that combine our security and emergency planning resources with those of local, state and federal entities.

The industry is pleased that the Government Accountability Office has recognized the many improvements the industry has made since Sept. 11 and in response to increased Nuclear Regulatory Commission requirements. The GAO also noted the improvements to the force-on-force security exercises that are uniquely used by the nuclear industry to test our security programs and systems. The industry has implemented most of the GAO's recommendations in this area. We will continue to working with Congress and government agencies to address emerging issues.

My testimony will address the following four issues:

- Growing electricity demand and concern over energy security and climate change has led to a resurgence of interest in nuclear energy. The Energy Policy Act of 2005, signed into law by President Bush and passed with broad bipartisan support in both branches of Congress, has added to an already increasing interest in the construction of new nuclear plants.

- Clearly, the nation's nuclear power plants are more secure today than they were before the Sept. 11 terrorists attacks. America's commercial nuclear power plants have long been considered the most secure facilities in our nation's critical infrastructure. Since 2001, the nuclear energy industry has made these facilities even more secure. Over the past four years, the NRC elevated nuclear facility security requirements numerous times by issuing orders and other formal requirements, and the agency is in the process of codifying additional requirements in rulemakings. The industry has invested more than $1.2 billion in security improvements at nuclear plant sites and has increased the number of specially trained, well-armed security forces by more than 60 percent.

- Since I last testified before this subcommittee in 2004, the industry has taken these broad actions to enhance security for our workers and our neighbors in the communities in which we operate nuclear power plants:

  - implemented NRC-approved security plans for each nuclear power plant
  - completed physical security improvements required by the NRC
  - conducted hundreds of force-on-force security exercises at 64 plants, including NRC-observed and -supervised force-on-force drills at 32 plant sites
  - implementing enhanced security provisions in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, in coordination with the NRC
  - completed more than 20 Department of Homeland Security comprehensive reviews of nuclear power plants.

- The nuclear energy industry recognizes that the spectrum of possible threats facing a nation can be larger than the design basis threat for a nuclear power plant. The design basis threat (DBT) defines the abilities of a potential attacking force against which the industry's security strategy must succeed. The industry has been a private sector leader, working under the auspices of the Department of Homeland Security, to assess a broader spectrum of threats to the nation's critical infrastructure. These assessments will help DHS decide how best to allocate federal and state resources to supplement private security forces at each plant site. Security at nuclear power plants provides a solid basis from which this more integrated federal, state, local and private response can be built. When the NRC elevated the DBT for nuclear power plants, it appropriately considered both the threats facing our nation, and the policy, legal and practical limitations on a private entity in facing these threats.

NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO U.S. ENERGY SECURITY

Prior to discussing how the industry ensures that our plants remain secure, it is important to emphasize the importance of nuclear energy to a diverse electric portfolio that helps maintain economic growth and our quality of life. Economic growth and quality of life are closely linked to affordable, abundant electricity.

Nuclear energy is a vital part of our nation's diverse energy portfolio, safely and cleanly producing electricity for one of every five U.S. homes and businesses. The United States remains the world leader in nuclear energy, with 103 reactors generating 783 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity in 2005—more than *all* of the electricity used in France and the United Kingdom combined. Nuclear energy is the United States' only large-scale source of electricity that is readily expandable and does not produce greenhouse gases. The industry's exemplary safety record and reliability, low operating costs and future price stability make nuclear energy a vital source of electricity today and for the future.

Coal and nuclear energy represent 70 percent of our electricity supply today. Since 1992, the electric industry has built more than 275,000 megawatts of natural gas-fired power plants, but has added only 14,000 megawatts of new nuclear and coal-fired capacity. All of those baseload power projects started construction in the 1980s. We are now suffering the consequences of relying too heavily upon one fuel for electricity production. Although electricity prices on the whole have increased far less than the prices of other consumer goods during the past two decades, high natural gas prices have caused dramatic electricity price increases in many regions during the past year. Natural gas also is a critical feedstock for other industries, such as chemical plants. The chemical industry has lost $50 billion in business to overseas operations since 2000, closed 100 chemical plants and laid off more than 100,000 workers.

Even with a strong commitment to efficiency and conservation, the Energy Information Administration predicts a 45-percent increase in electricity demand by 2030 as our population and the electrification of our economy continue to increase. The electric utility industry is embarking on one of the most expansive building programs in its history with the construction of baseload generation such as nuclear and coal plants and new transmission infrastructure. Significant new coal and nuclear capacity, complemented by natural gas and renewables sources, will be needed to meet this growing electricity demand.

Congress recognized the need for a diverse energy portfolio in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The bill provides limited, broad-based stimulus for investment in new electric power

infrastructure, including new nuclear power plants. Coupled with this growing electricity demand, the comprehensive energy legislation has stimulated companies to pursue a combined construction and operating license for new reactor designs. Nine companies, consortia or joint ventures are pursuing actions toward building between 12 and 19 new nuclear plants. These companies are developing applications for combined construction and operating licenses, which they intend to file with the NRC over the next two years. At $50 million to $90 million per application, these nine applications represent as much as $1 billion in investment by the industry in new nuclear plants. The industry also is investing approximately $500 million in the Department of Energy's Nuclear Power 2010 program.

Increasing investment by the public and private sectors in exploring the construction of new nuclear plants has generated interested on Wall Street. Fitch Ratings is one of the Wall Street firms bullish on the prospect of new nuclear plants in the near term:

> It is no longer a matter of debate whether there will be new nuclear plants in the industry's future. Now, the discussion has shifted to predictions of how many, where and when. ... New nuclear plants and baseload power plants using new coal technologies are least likely to appear in the populous and energy-hungry Northeast or in California, regions that already have significantly higher energy prices than the Southeast and Midwest. For political or geological reasons, these regions are likely to rely either on gas-fired power facilities or costly investments for other resources, such as wind or solar. These differences will tend to favor lower energy prices in the Southeast and Midwest to the disadvantage of the Northeast and California.[1]

New nuclear power plants are expected to begin operation in 2014-2015. This estimate includes approximately three years for the NRC to review the license application and four years for construction of the facility. We expect that both the application process and construction times will be streamlined as these standardized plant designs are built.

[1] "Wholesale Power Market Update," Fitch Ratings Ltd., March 13, 2006

NUCLEAR ENERGY PROVIDES CLEAN-AIR BENEFITS

NEI has testified to this subcommittee in previous years regarding the clean-air benefits of nuclear energy, including the role that nuclear energy must play in voluntary or regional agreements to reduce greenhouse gases. Without restating these benefits broadly, I would like to make a few points regarding the importance of nuclear energy for clean air and for addressing concerns about climate change.

Simply stated, nuclear power plants generate electricity without producing greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO_2). Preventing emissions of greenhouse gases with the use of nuclear power and renewable energy sources is as important as reducing the equivalent amount of emissions from electricity produced by emitting sources. For example, nuclear power plants prevented the emission of about 700 million tons of CO_2 in 2004, which is equivalent to eliminating the CO_2 emissions from all of the passenger cars in the United States.

Nuclear energy's clean-air benefits are widely recognized by policymakers and environmental organizations as they look at the issues of energy production, air quality and climate change. A February report from the Pew Center on Global Climate Change says

> [N]uclear power is one of the few options for no-carbon electricity production, [and] efforts should be made to preserve this option. However, nuclear power's ability to contribute significantly to a low-carbon future over the next 50 years depends on the ability of the nuclear industry to start expanding nuclear generating capacity in the next 10-15 years, as well as on the resolution of cost, safety, and waste storage issues.[2]

Last year, the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI), a think tank affiliated with the Democratic Leadership Council, said nuclear power is a vital energy technology that should be part of the nation's comprehensive clean-air strategy. In its report, "A New Clean Air Strategy," PPI said, "lawmakers should acknowledge nuclear power's potential not only to reduce undue reliance on natural gas, but also help combat climate change and clean up the air."

[2] "Agenda for Climate Action," Pew Center on Global Climate Change, February 2006, p. 9.

Energy ministers from the G8 countries, at a March 2006 meeting, said that joint efforts of the G8 and other countries aimed at wider use of renewable and alternative energies, development and implementation of innovative energy technologies and development of low-carbon energy would contribute substantially to fuel diversification for energy production and energy security. "For those countries that wish, wide-scale development of safe and secure nuclear energy is crucial for long-term environmentally sustainable diversification of energy supply," the ministers' statement said.

Extending the operation of today's reactors and building new nuclear power plants is imperative as part of a diverse portfolio to meet the nation's energy demand and air quality goals. Most of America's nuclear power plants were brought on line in the 1970s and 1980s. As a nuclear plant's initial operating license lasts 40 years, one-third of the 103 reactors already has applied for and received an extension from the NRC for 20 additional years. NEI expects most, if not all, of the remaining plants to apply for license renewal. If nuclear power plants are retired and not systematically replaced with new nuclear generation at the end of 60 years of operation, our nation will start losing the most important source of electricity to prevent greenhouse gas emissions.

The addition of renewable energy sources, mostly wind power, has escalated in many states, and the nuclear industry supports the role of renewable energy sources as part of a diverse energy portfolio. However, renewable energy sources cannot meet the 24/7 demand for electricity. For that reason, investment in advanced-design nuclear plants is essential to any realistic effort to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Nuclear Plants Have the Best Private Security in the Nation

The nuclear energy industry is committed to the most effective security at nuclear plant sites to protect the employees and plant neighbors, as well as the plants themselves. America's nuclear energy facilities must meet strict NRC regulations for security. Nuclear power plants are the

most secure commercially owned facilities in the country, and there is a high degree of public confidence that the industry can operate nuclear power plants safely and securely.[3]

The industry is proud of its security programs and the example they provide for other sectors of America's critical industrial infrastructure. I recommend that members of this subcommittee and any member of Congress visit a nuclear plant to see these security programs firsthand and meet the professionals that manage and implement our security programs. All U.S. plants meet the same high standards established and inspected by the NRC.

Compared to other commercial facilities, nuclear power plants start with a clear advantage in the area of security. The structures that house reactors and other critical systems are built to withstand natural events such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires and floods. They are massive structures with thick, steel-reinforced exterior walls and internal barriers of reinforced concrete. As such, the structures provide a large measure of protection against potential attacks that were not anticipated when they were built. In addition, the "defense-in-depth" philosophy used in nuclear facility design means that plants have redundant systems to ensure safety. Many of these redundant safety systems are separated physically so that if one area of the plant is compromised, backup systems in another part of the plant can maintain safety. This redundancy provides a capability to respond to a variety of events.

Our difficult-to-penetrate structures are just the first stage of a multi-stage security strategy that also includes surveillance and monitoring, detection equipment, strict access control using biometrics and other technology, and physical security using structures and paramilitary security forces. Nuclear power plants also have concentric perimeters with increased security at each level. Physical barriers protect against vehicle intrusion, including truck bombs. These security zones are protected by trained and armed professionals, who use hardened defensive fighting positions located throughout the plant, if needed. In the innermost security zone, access to the vital areas of our plants is strictly controlled and constantly monitored.

[3] Sixty-four percent of the public gives U.S. nuclear power plants high safety ratings (5 to 7 on a 7-point scale), according to a March 2006 survey of 1,000 U.S. adults by Bisconti Research Inc./NOP World. Question: "Thinking about the nuclear power plants that are operating now, how *safe* do you regard these plants? Please think of a scale from "1" to "7," where "1" means *very unsafe* and "7" means *very safe*."

Industry employees undergo comprehensive background checks, a systematic fitness-for-duty program and a continual behavioral observation program. Every plant also has extensive plans and arrangements to coordinate with state and local law enforcement and emergency response entities. In addition, every plant must conduct drills and exercises to ensure a well-prepared, comprehensive emergency response plan.

The combination of strong structures, perimeter protection, access controls and other security measures at nuclear power plants greatly exceeds the security provided for other elements of the critical infrastructure. The strength and safety features of nuclear power plants, including multiple safe-shutdown systems, make it unlikely that there would be a radiological release that would affect public health and safety.

The FBI considers security forces and infrastructure at nuclear power plants formidable and nuclear power plants difficult to penetrate.

The plant features that protect the public from radiological hazard in the event of a reactor incident also protect the plant's fuel and related safety systems from attempted sabotage. Redundant safety and reactor shutdown systems have been designed to withstand the impact of earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes and floods. Areas of the plant that house the reactor and used reactor fuel also would withstand the impact of a widebody commercial aircraft, according to peer-reviewed analyses by the Electric Power Research Institute, a Palo Alto, Calif.-based research organization.

Moreover, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) also found that nuclear power plants would be unattractive targets to terrorist organizations because of the industry's robust security program. CSIS President John Hamre, former deputy secretary of defense under President Clinton, said that nuclear power plants "are probably our best-defended targets. There is more security around nuclear power plants than anything else we've got. ... One of the things that we have clearly found ... is that this is an industry that has taken security pretty seriously for

quite a long time, and its infrastructure, especially against these kinds of terrorist threats, is extremely good."

NRC, Industry Taking Decisive Steps Against Emerging Threats

The NRC and the industry have undertaken decisive steps to reassess security programs and implement additional measures to ensure that nuclear plants are safe and secure, considering today's threat environment. These steps include:

- a reassessment of industry security programs and the regulations governing them
- a plant-by-plant review of security programs
- significant investment in security officers and capital improvements to strengthen plant security
- enhanced training and force-on-force exercise program
- additional programs to coordinate with federal, state and local governments to develop integrated deterrence and response capabilities
- major studies to reassess our plants' ability to withstand attack.

It is important to recognize the roles of both the NRC and the industry in securing nuclear power plants. The NRC mandates that each plant provide security to protect against the design basis threat. Although this is defined in detailed orders and regulations, it is the responsibility of electric utilities that operate U.S. reactors to define the plant-specific strategies to defend against the DBT and demonstrate that the strategies work at each nuclear plant site. It is the federal government's responsibility to determine the potential risk of terrorist attacks and to provide a coordinated approach to support the plant for attacks within the DBT and those beyond the DBT. This is accomplished using a combination of intelligence-gathering, federal law enforcement and other resources.

THE NRC AND INDUSTRY HAVE SYSTEMATICALLY IMPROVED SECURITY SINCE 2001

As NEI noted in testimony to this subcommittee in 2004, the nuclear energy industry has bolstered security at its plants, making them even more secure. Since 2001, the industry and the NRC have reviewed every facet of nuclear plant security and as a result have implemented improvements in both the regulatory requirements and the plants' physical, human and strategic capabilities.

Immediately after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the NRC ordered all nuclear power plants to remain on high alert. The industry limited access to its plants, expanded protective security perimeters, constructed temporary barriers along the outer perimeter of plants and discontinued non-essential access. In addition, nuclear power plants immediately began hiring additional security personnel and upgrading overall security programs.

In February 2002, the NRC issued several interim security orders. These orders, in effect, increased the DBT with a commensurate increase in security at nuclear power plants. The industry complied fully with the NRC orders and instituted additional measures, including:

- extending and fortifying security perimeters
- increasing armed patrols within security zones
- installing new barriers to protect against vehicle intrusion
- installing additional high-tech surveillance and detection equipment
- strengthening security coordination with local, state and federal agencies to integrate approaches among these entities—a position the industry continues to support.

In the months following the NRC orders, the industry developed guidance that was approved by the agency to ensure consistent and thorough implementation of the new security requirements.

The NRC issued three additional orders in April 2003 after completing a top-to-bottom review of security and studying potential threats to nuclear power plants. The new DBT increased the size of a potential vehicle bomb and the number of terrorist attackers against which the industry

would have to defend in a ground assault. The new DBT also increased the modes of potential attack to include water-borne assaults. Each plant was ordered to make the necessary modifications to meet the new DBT by October 2004.

The NRC also issued orders that enhanced training and qualification of security officers, improved access controls at nuclear facilities and established work-hour limits for security personnel. These orders required the industry to develop and submit new security and safeguards contingency plans, as well as enhance training and qualification programs. The industry developed standardized templates to meet these new requirements and obtained NRC approval on the templates for industry use. This innovative approach assured consistent industry implementation of the security orders.

As a result of these new requirements, the number of security officers at 64 plant sites has increased from approximately 5,000 to 8,000. Other changes at every nuclear plant include physical improvements to provide additional protection against vehicle bombs and against water- and land-based assaults. Every plant has augmented security forces, increased security patrols, added security posts, lengthened vehicle standoff distances, tightened access controls, and enhanced coordination with state and local law enforcement and response organizations.

The industry has invested more than $1.2 billion in additional security measures since September 2001. Physical improvements and equipment upgrades at nuclear plants comprise the majority of this total, but the industry also has spent several hundred million dollars on additional security personnel, which represents an ongoing cost at each site. NRC security spending also has increased significantly in recent years and reached $80 million for homeland security activities in its fiscal 2006 budget.

The NRC again is reviewing the DBT for nuclear power plants, responding to concerns from various stakeholders and direction from Congress in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to more formally adopt a new DBT in regulations. The NRC accepted public comments on its proposed rule, and the commission expects to adopt a final rule by February 2007.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE REPORT ON NUCLEAR PLANT SECURITY

The GAO recently completed a report evaluating security at commercial nuclear power plants. In the process of compiling data for its assessment, the GAO met with NEI representatives and visited nuclear power plants to observe security and force-on-force drills. The industry finds the report to be well-documented, reasonably accurate and fair. While GAO identifies specific areas regarding the effectiveness of programs where improvements can and will be made, we urge members of this subcommittee and other members of Congress to consider some of the key findings of the report that relate to the more important overall programmatic aspects of security:

- "The NRC revised the DBT for nuclear power plants using a generally logical and well-defined process in which trained threat assessment staff made recommendations for changes based on an analysis of demonstrated terrorist capabilities. The process resulted in a DBT requiring plants to defend against a larger terrorist threat, including a larger number of attackers, a refined and expanded list of weapons, and an increase in the maximum size of a vehicle bomb."

- The industry "made substantial security improvements after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and in response to the revised DBT. At the sites we visited, these actions included, for example adding security barriers and detection equipment, implementing new protective strategies, enhancing access control and hiring additional security officers … The site's efforts have been substantial and, in some cases, have gone beyond what was required."

- "NRC has taken a number of actions as part of its restructuring of the force-on-force program that satisfy the recommendations we made to strengthen the program. … the attackers in the force-on-force exercise scenarios we observed used many of the adversary characteristics of the revised DBT … In addition, NRC officials told us that the adversaries were trained in military tactics."

Appropriately, NEI and its member companies have been engaged with the NRC in taking these significant steps to improve security at nuclear power plants. At the request of the NRC, the

industry has provided comments on specific aspects of its evolving requirements. The NRC has agreed with some of our recommendations, but certainly not all of them. We believe that the NRC acted appropriately in seeking and considering the views of government entities as well as the industry prior to making changes to its security requirements.

As noted by the GAO, however, the NRC followed an unusual process of seeking input while simultaneously analyzing intelligence information. This is hardly surprising considering the heightened national concern over homeland security. In addition, the NRC cannot publicly disclose safeguarded information regarding nuclear plant security, making an open debate over those details difficult, if not impossible.

Even with the NRC's set of new requirements and significant measures taken by the industry to enhance security, making these facilities secure from potential threats does not end with the industry's comprehensive measures. It is vital that industry security be integrated with local, state and federal resources. Some postulated threats, such as attacks by large forces or by forces using advanced weaponry, are beyond the industry's DBT and are the responsibility of the federal government and the military. Privately funded security forces have practical and legal limits on the force they can use and, thus on their overall capabilities to defend against an attack.

The GAO recognized this point when it stated that "consideration of issues such as what is reasonable to defend against is an appropriate role of the commission in approving changes to the DBT." The DBT is a requirement placed upon the companies that operate nuclear power plants and cannot be greater than what licensees reasonably can be expected to provide. That does not mean, however, that the DBT represents the outer limits of security that is provided at our plants.

The nuclear energy industry recognizes that there is a theoretical possibility of an attack beyond the capabilities of plant security. In such cases, plant personnel would help respond in coordination with local, state and federal authorities. The industry has provided national leadership in this area by being one of the first industrial sectors to establish a Sector

Coordinating Committee with DHS to provide a forum for integrating industry and off-site resources for threats that exceed our stand-alone capabilities.

In addition, the nuclear energy industry is the first industrial sector to participate in the DHS Comprehensive Review Program. The comprehensive reviews examine every element of the critical infrastructure, including a thorough security assessment, and DHS provides recommendations on additional measures that can be taken to protect against and mitigate possible terrorist attacks. The assessment and recommendations involve local, state and federal authorities with the goal of achieving the most effective allocation of resources across the various sectors of the critical infrastructure.

During these comprehensive reviews, a multidisciplinary team spends a week reviewing a site's vulnerabilities and security plans and also spends three to five days at the site interacting with security personnel, emergency planning and response staff, and state and local law enforcement and emergency responders. More than 20 nuclear plant sites already have participated in this program, and we expect that all nuclear power plants will complete comprehensive reviews by July 2007.

The nuclear industry also has completed 22 assessments using the Department of Homeland Security's Risk Assessment and Management for Critical Asset Protection (RAMCAP) model. This program provides comprehensive vulnerability and consequence assessment and is a tool that is used for informing the agency's comprehensive reviews.

Clearly, the industry is fully committed to working with all levels of government to provide the best security possible to deter an attack and to respond forcefully and swiftly should one occur. The industry must always satisfy the security requirements imposed by the NRC, yet it is constantly working to improve security at nuclear plants through training, drills and exercises; implementation of new technology; and cooperation with government entities such as DHS, FBI and local law enforcement.

FORCE-ON-FORCE EXERCISES HAVE BEEN IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY

The industry is pleased that the GAO has recognized the many improvements that have been made to the force-on-force security exercises that are used uniquely by the nuclear industry to test, as realistically as possible, our security programs and systems. Most of the GAO's recommendations for industry in this area already have been implemented.

The GAO is incorrect, in a sense, when it says that the revised DBT has been tested at only about a third of our sites. The DBT has been tested at all nuclear plant sites and the NRC has evaluated half of them. The NRC evaluates force-on-force exercises every three years at every site and is following an aggressive schedule of overseeing more than 20 exercises per year.

The industry also conducts multiple other force-on-force drills annually that are not supervised by the NRC. These exercises are part of the ongoing programmatic training and drilling cycle for our security officers. These additional drills and exercises allow the industry to continually test our protective strategies. These quarterly drills and annual exercises are comparable to the full-scale, force-on-force drill observed every three years by the NRC.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASING NUCLEAR PLANT SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

The industry recommends that Congress and other policymakers bear in mind that security at our nuclear power plants is a shared responsibility between the plant owners, the NRC, federal, state and local government. The industry has made significant investments in its security programs, which are unparalleled in the industrial sector, and we are committed to providing the necessary security at our sites. In this regard, the industry believes the greatest enhancement in security around nuclear plant sites will now occur when we develop comprehensive strategies that combine our security and emergency response resources with those of local, state and federal entities to fully protect these facilities and the people who work and live near them against the threats deemed appropriate by the federal government.

The industry has recognized the need to develop coordinated response capabilities to prevent and respond to potential attacks on our critical infrastructure. Through our activities with the NRC, DHS and other government entities, the nuclear energy industry has been a leader in these efforts, and we encourage members of this subcommittee to remain engaged on this issue to ensure that every sector in the critical infrastructure follows suit. The nuclear energy industry is justifiably and understandably proud of its leadership and accomplishments in the area of security. We are pleased that the GAO agrees that our security has been improved greatly, and we will continue to work with government agencies and Congress to address emerging issues.

Security at America's nuclear facilities was exceptional prior to Sept. 11 and is even better today. It is highly unlikely that attackers could successfully breach security at a nuclear power plant, and even more unlikely that they could achieve a result that would endanger the residents near our facilities. Yet, security at our nuclear power plants is not static. We constantly are assessing and testing our security programs. Consequently, America's nuclear energy industry will remain a leader and model for protecting our nation's critical infrastructure.